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# COMPUTER DICTIONARY

SECOND EDITION



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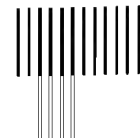
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was used by many manufacturers of IBM AT clones for mounting the 80286 microprocessor because the LCC method is cheaper to implement than the pin grid array method used by IBM and Compaq. *Compare* dual in-line package, pin grid array; *see also* plastic leaderless chip carrier.

**leading** Pronounced "led-ing." The space, expressed in points, between lines of type, measured from the baseline (bottom) of one line to the baseline of the next; derived from the traditional typesetting practice of inserting thin bars of lead between lines of metal type. See the illustration. *See also* point.

**leading edge** The initial part of an electronic signal. If a digital signal switches from off to on and then back to off, the transition from off to on is the leading edge of the signal, and the transition from on to off is the trailing edge of the signal.

**leading zero** A zero that precedes the most significant (leftmost) digit of a number. One or more leading zeros may be used as fill characters in a field containing numeric input. Leading zeros have no significance in the value of a number; for example, 1234 and 00001234 are the same number.

**leaf** Any node (location) in a tree structure that is at the farthest distance from the root (primary node), no matter which path is followed. Thus, in any tree, a leaf is a node at the end of a branch—one that has no descendants. *See also* root, subtree, tree.

**leapfrog test** A diagnostic routine that repeatedly copies itself onto the storage medium; used for testing disk or tape storage.

**leased line** A telephone channel leased from a common carrier for private use. A leased line provides a slightly wider bandwidth than a line connected through the standard switched telephone network, and because calls are not routed through switching equipment, the line can be

conditioned to minimize signal distortion. A leased line is faster, quieter, and generally more expensive than a switched telephone line.

**least significant bit** Abbreviated LSB. In a sequence of one or more bytes, the low-order (usually rightmost) bit of a binary number. *Compare* most significant bit; *see also* low-order.

**least significant character** Abbreviated LSC. The low-order, or rightmost, character in a string. *Compare* most significant character; *see also* low-order.

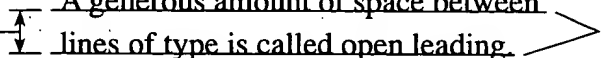
**least significant digit** Abbreviated LSD. The low-order, or rightmost, digit in the normal representation of a number. *Compare* most significant digit.

**LED** *See* light-emitting diode.

**LED printer** Short for light-emitting diode printer, an electrophotographic printer similar to LCD and laser printers. Like other electrophotographic printers, an LED printer uses an electrostatically charged drum to transfer toner to a piece of paper. The drum is photosensitive, and the charge is added by applying light to it in the pattern of the image desired for the page. Because of these similarities, LED printers are often labeled incorrectly as laser printers. The significant difference between LED and laser or LCD printers is in the light source: LED printers use an array of light-emitting diodes that turn on and off as the drum rotates, exposing the drum in the proper pattern to form an image. Because they use an array of individual lights switching on and off, LED printers use more electricity than laser printers, which use a single light source directed across the drum by a mirror. *Compare* ion-deposition printer, laser printer, LCD printer; *see also* electrophotographic printers, nonimpact printer, page printer.

**left-justify** A term sometimes used to mean left-align—that is, to line up along the left. *See also* align, rag.

**legend** Text that describes or explains a graphic,

Leading  A generous amount of space between lines of type is called open leading.

*Leading. Ordinary text is typically set with leading one or two points greater than the point size of the type.*



capable of rendering a range of intensities in only one color, as in a gray-scale monitor.

**Monochrome Display Adapter** See MDA.

**monochrome graphics adapter** See HGC.

**monographics adapter** A generic term for any video adapter that can display only monochrome text and graphics; any video adapter functionally compatible with the Hercules Graphics Card. See also HGC.

**monospace font** Also called a fixed-width font. A typewriterlike font (set of characters in a particular style and size) in which each character occupies the same amount of horizontal space regardless of its width—an *i*, for example, taking as much room as an *m*. Compare proportional font.

This is a line of monospace text.

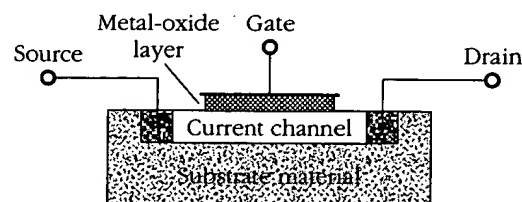
**monospacing** Also called fixed-width, fixed-pitch, or fixed spacing. A form of print and display spacing in which each character occupies the same amount of horizontal space on the line, regardless of whether the character is wide (such as *m*) or narrow (such as *i*). Compare proportional spacing.

**Monte Carlo method** A mathematical technique that uses repeated calculations and random numbers to find an approximate solution to a complex problem. The Monte Carlo method, named because of its relationship to games of chance, can be used in situations in which it is possible to calculate the probability of a particular event occurring but not to factor in the complex effects of many other contributing factors. Random numbers are used somewhat like a coin toss for assuming whether an event does or does not occur and for basing calculations on that assumption.

**MOS** Pronounced "moss"; acronym for metal-oxide semiconductor. A semiconductor device whose design is based on the insulating properties of certain metal oxides, such as aluminum oxide or silicon dioxide. MOS designs are widely used both in discrete components and in integrated circuits. MOS integrated circuits have the advantages of high component density, high speed, and low power consumption. MOS de-

vices are easily damaged by static electricity, so before they are inserted in a circuit they should be kept with their connectors embedded in conducting foam to prevent the buildup of static charges.

**MOSFET** Pronounced "moss-fett"; acronym for metal-oxide semiconductor field-effect transistor. A common type of field-effect transistor that uses a layer of metal oxide to insulate the gate from the current channel, as shown in the illustration. MOSFETs have extremely high input impedance and therefore require almost no driving power. They are used in many audio applications, including high-gain amplifier circuits. Like all metal-oxide semiconductor (MOS) devices, MOSFETs are easily damaged by static electricity.



**MOSFET.**

*A schematic cross section of a MOSFET transistor.*

**most significant bit** Abbreviated MSB. In a sequence of one or more bytes, the highest-order bit of a binary number, not including the sign bit. Compare least significant bit; see also high-order.

**most significant character** Abbreviated MSC. The high-order, or leftmost, character in a string. Compare least significant character.

**most significant digit** Abbreviated MSD. In a sequence of one or more digits, the highest-order digit. Compare least significant digit.

**motherboard** The main circuit board containing the primary components of a computer system. See the illustration on the next page. This board contains the processor, main memory, support circuitry, and bus controller and connector. Other boards, including expansion memory and input/output boards, may attach to the motherboard via the bus connector. Compare daughterboard; see also expansion slot.